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PATENT SPECIFICATION

DRAWINGS ATTACHED

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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

Improvements in Golf Practice Devices

I, WILLIAM McGAWN LEES, a British subject, of 604 Walton Road, West Molesey, Surrey, do hereby declare the invention, for which I pray that a patent may be granted to me, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to golf practice devices.

It is recognised among the foremost exponents and teachers of the game of golf that there are certain fundamental principles which must be adhered to if the execution of the stroke is to be achieved with repeated accuracy. Apart from static fundamentals, such as the grip and stance, which arise prior to the execution of the stroke, there are also dynamic fundamentals during the swing and the present invention is concerned primarily with certain aspects of such dynamic fundamentals.

In order that a golf ball shall be struck with consistent accuracy, it is desirable that the club head at impact should travel along the intended line of flight of the ball and at right angles thereto for as long as possible so that, during the fraction of a second when the club head is in contact with the ball, no lateral spin which would cause a slice or hook is imparted. Of course, it is sometimes desirable to impart fade or draw to the ball, and, in extreme cases hook or slice, but here we are dealing with the execution of a standard golf shot when the intention is to propel the ball with an undeviating flight at the correct trajectory. To achieve correct striking at impact, there are two main precepts which must be followed and from these the remaining parts of the swing follow as a matter of course. One precept is that the club head should be taken away, from the address position behind the ball, along the intended line of flight with the club face square for as long as possible keeping the club head close to the ground and, if this is done, the back swing has a good chance of being executed

correctly. The other precept is that during and immediately after impact, there should be no drawing the club face across the ball by a movement of the hands towards the left hip which would cause a slice and which is one of the most prevalent errors found among beginners at the game.

Most golf teaching tells what should or should not be done during the swing and it is left to the player to try and put this teaching into practice; a very difficult and time consuming operation unless the layer has expert tuition on hand all the time to tell him where he has erred. In this sense, present teaching is negative and it is the main object of this invention to provide apparatus which enables a positive approach to golf teaching.

According to the present invention there is provided a golf practice device including a striking surface and two parallel elongated guide means located above the plane of the striking surface and parallel thereto and relatively spaced slightly greater than the heel to toe distance of a wooden club, said guide means being yieldable to the head of a club but capable of imparting "feel" to the player when the club head strikes either of said guide means.

The invention further includes a golf practice device as specified above in combination with a support on which the player takes his stance, the support being interconnected with the device by a rod.

In order that the invention may readily be understood, one embodiment thereof will now be described, by way of example only, and with reference to the accompanying drawing in which:—

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a golf practice device constructed in accordance with the invention;

Fig. 2 is a sectional view on the line II—II of Fig. 1; and

Fig. 3 is a plan view of the golf practice

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device of Figs. 1 and 2 shown in combination with a support on which a player may take his stance.

In the drawings there is shown a frame generally indicated at 1, said frame including two feet 2 and 3 and interconnecting rods 4 and 5. The entire frame may be made of metal and the various parts welded together. The two feet 2 and 3 are each provided with two holes 6 and 7 through which bolts may be passed to clamp the frame on a surface, for example the floor of a bay in a golf driving range. At the ends of rods 4 and 5 are upstanding spigots 8 and 9 respectively, the free ends of each pair of spigots facing each other. These spigots support guide means in the form of two tubular members 10 and 11 respectively. These tubular members 10 and 11 are of synthetic plastics material and are tubular so that the ends thereof may be located on the spigots 8 and 9. These guide means 10 and 11, being made of tubular synthetic plastics material, are yieldable to a certain degree but are sufficiently rigid to remain substantially straight when they are supported solely at their ends by the spigots 8 and 9. The disposition of the guide means are such that they are parallel to each other and the distance between them is slightly greater than the heel to toe distance of a standard wooden golf club. The guide means may be made of other material, for example, rubber.

Carried by the frame 1 is a mat 12 which may be of rubber or rubber like material or synthetic plastics material and may have a plain upper surface which acts as the striking surface or may be ribbed longitudinally so as to reduce the friction between the club head and the surface on the club head striking the same during execution of a shot. This mat 12 has a slot 13 positioned centrally and longitudinally thereof for the reception of a tee-peg.

The device above described may be used alone or in combination with a support on which the player may take his stance, and such a support is illustrated in Fig. 3 generally at 14, the two units 1 and 14 being interconnected by rod 15. The rod 15 is attached by bolts to the foot 3 and the other end of the rod 15 passes into a tubular part 16 at one end of the support 14. The other end of the support 14 has a similar tubular part 17 which would be used if the player were left-handed, and in this case the rod 15 would be positioned at the other side of the two units, namely, connected to tubular part 17 and foot 2.

The support 14 has a non-slip surface 18 on which various markings are arranged so as to assist the player in taking his stance. These markings include a line 19 three inches from the front edge 20 of the support, two lines 21 and 22 parallel with tubular portion 16 and spaced at five inch intervals therefrom, and two further lines 23 and 24, the front end 25 of line 23 being five inches from edge 20 and

the perpendicular distance between the lines 23 and 24 being five inches. Both lines 23 and 24 are at an angle of $22\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ with respect to the tubular portion 17. Also provided on support 14 is a triangular mark 26 which indicates the central point of the edge 20 of the support 14.

As will be appreciated, the construction illustrated in Fig. 3 is for use by a right-handed golfer. Modern playing techniques suggest that the right foot be placed at right angles to the line of flight and, therefore, for a golfer of normal height and build the right foot should be located between the lines 21 and 22 with the toe on line 19. The left foot should be splayed outwardly at an angle of $22\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ and for a square stance the left foot should be located between lines 23 and 24 with the toe at line 19. This is not to say that this position should be taken by every golfer because techniques in striking the ball differ from one golfer to another, but the lines indicated on the support 14 are so that the player may see to what extent and in which manner he differs from a standard stance. The distance between positions of the feet is chosen so as to represent the playing of a five iron which, being an intermediate club, results in the markings forming the mean for all shots.

When a player has taken his stance, the normal position of the club head should be midway between the guides 10 and 11. This may be accomplished by adjusting the position of support 14 on rod 15 and will probably be different for each player. A wing nut (not shown) may hold the rod in its adjusted position. A ball may be teed up on the striking surface 12 by placing a tee peg within the slot 13 and resting the ball on the tee peg. Considerable variation in the positioning of the tee peg in relation to the feet of the player is allowed for by the slot 13 being elongated. This slot should be mid-way between the guides 10 and 11. As the club head is taken back along the striking surface 12 it will be guided in its correct path by the guides 10 and 11 and primarily by guide 11, because the tendency of a beginner at the game is to take the club head back outside the intended line of flight. As soon as the club head is raised above the striking surface the guides will have no effect and will allow the player to take the club head back in the requisite arc. However, the guides have ensured that for the most important part of the backswing, namely the first twelve or fourteen inches, the club head has travelled along the correct path. In a similar manner, when the club head returns to the impact position and the follow through starts, any tendency for the player to draw the club head towards his left hip will encounter a slight resistance to that movement due to the guide 10. This will mean that after constant practice the club head will travel in the correct line immediately after impact.

It will be appreciated from the above that the guide means 10 and 11 do not in fact make the club head travel in a path other than that guided by the player, but when the club head strikes either of these guide means the player "feels" the contact of the club head with the guide means and at his next practice stroke endeavours to avoid such contact. Thus, after repeated practice, the lack of contact will become more and more apparent with the consequent improvement in the player's ability to control the club head in the backswing and the hitting area.

Although not shown in the drawings a further piece of equipment may be provided with the above golf practice device which is the provision of a flexible but self-supporting rod which may be attached to the device 1 or may be free-standing having at one end means for abutting the head of the player to give an indication of head movement to the player during execution of a stroke. The flexible self-supporting rod will, of course, be out of the way of the club during its movement in the swing and will be adjustable to suit players of different heights. Here again, the means which abuts the head of the player will not prevent the head moving but will be an indication to the player if his head does move.

The device may be modified within the scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims, for example the guide 11 may, for part of its length, be of inverted L-shape to prevent a player lifting the club off the ground during the initial part of the backswing.

WHAT I CLAIM IS:—

1. A golf practice device, including a striking surface and two parallel elongated guide means located above the plane of the striking surface and parallel thereto and relatively spaced slightly greater than the heel to toe distance of a wooden club, said guide means being yieldable to the head of a club but capable of imparting "feel" to the player when the club head strikes either of said guide means.

2. A golf practice device as claimed in Claim 1, in which said guide means are of tubular synthetic plastics material supported solely at their ends.

3. A golf practice device as claimed in either Claim 1 or Claim 2, in which the said guide means are supported by a frame which carries a mat having the striking surface.

4. A golf practice device as claimed in Claim 3, in which the frame includes two spaced feet having interconnecting rods, both ends of each rod having a spigot which receives an end of a guide means so that the guide means lie above and parallel to said rods.

5. A golf practice device as claimed in either Claim 3 or Claim 4, in which said mat has an elongated slot longitudinally and centrally thereof for the reception of a tee peg.

6. A golf practice device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims in combination with a support on which the player takes his stance, the support being interconnected with the device by a rod.

7. The combination as claimed in Claim 6, in which the support has markings thereon to assist the player in correctly adjusting his stance.

8. A golf practice device substantially as herein described with reference to Figs. 1 and 2 of the accompanying drawing.

9. The combination of a golf practice device with a support substantially as herein described with reference to Fig. 3 of the accompanying drawing.

10. A golf practice device as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims 1 to 5 or Claim 8, in combination with a flexible but self-supporting rod having at one end means for abutting the head of the player to give an indication to the player during execution of a stroke of head movement.

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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

1 SHEET

This drawing is a reproduction of
the Original on a reduced scale

